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SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Madam...Mr. President, Senator Coordsen. This measure deals with the whistle-blower act of...it has a special name for it, it's like State Effective...Government Effectiveness Act, but we know it as the whistle-blower act. It was introduced last year and was reported out by the Government Committee unanimously, but we ran out of time, didn't get to it. The four provisions that were in there last year are there again, and there is one new provision that relates to a recent Supreme Court decision. First provision that's in the bill, it sets a time limit of 90 days for those instances in which a hearing must be held by the Personnel Board or a related body when the Public Counsel, our Ombudsman, finds a violation that has occurred or is about to occur, that an employee is being retaliated against because they brought forth information about waste, fraud or abuse to the Public Counsel. Currently, there is no deadline as to how long they can set and, in fact, one of the problems has been that the process has been a little too lengthy. This puts a deadline on. Secondly, that states, it states that no appeal by the state will operate as a supersedeas, thus ensuring that an employee who has made an allegation is allowed to continue working. What happened in a recent case was the Ombudsman said there was retaliation. The Personnel Board said there was retaliation and that they should be put back to work, but the agency went to court and got a delay and they were kept off work for another six months or a year, and the...it's like the meter was running the whole time for back wages. Well, this says, look, the state gets to appeal, but if the finding is that there has been a retaliation, put them back on the job, and then go ahead with your appeal. Why? Because it will reduce the ultimate costs if, in fact, the state's appeal is wrong, the employee is right, and they are entitled to recovery. Third, it raises the standard for what a Public Counsel has to find before they turn over the case and find that there is...that retaliation is likely to have occurred. It is a change from a reasonable grounds to a preponderance of the evidence grounds, which is the normal civil standard that you would use. Fourth, it authorizes reasonable attorneys fees to be paid from funds of the violating agency when an employee prevails at the hearing and shows that the agency is retaliating against them. Now the amendment, which I will refer to now, but we will act on in a moment, is in